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Sept/Oct 2025



Happy Halloween!



Minneapolis's Guide to Specialty Shopping & Fun Events



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Special Events

September

5-7.....Monthly Sew In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
6.....Fall Opening - Country Craft Shed - Duluth
19-21.....Monthly Sew In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
25-27.....Des Moines Area Quilters Guild Quilt Show - Des Moines, IA
25-27.....Junk Bonanza - Shakopee

October

3-5.....Monthly Sew In - Up North Quilt Shop - International Falls
3-11.....Northwoods Quilt Trek - Quilted Dog - Cloquet
13-18.....Anniversary Celebration - Quarry Quilts and Yarns - Sandstone
29-31.....Trick or Treat Shop Hop - Calico Cat Quilt Shop - Pipestone
29-31.....Trick or Treat Shop Hop - Sewing Basket - Luverne
29-31.....Trick or Treat Shop Hop - Old Alley Quilt Shop - Sherburn

November

6-8.....Hometown Holiday Road Trip - See ad pg 6
6-8.....Hometown Holiday Road Trip - The Thimble Box - New Ulm
6-8.....Hometown Holiday Road Trip - Sewing Seeds - New Ulm
7.....Christmas Arrives - Farmer's Daughter - White Bear Lake
7-8.....Festival of Trees Holiday Open House - DeAnn's Country Village - Litchfield
28-30.....Christmas Sale - Country Craft Shed - Duluth

Happy Fall Y'all!



Shirley Dessellier of Oklee, MN won a copy of *Artful Insights in Fabric*. Shirley picked up her copy of *The Country Register* at Oklee Quilt Shop in Oklee, MN!

Congratulations Shirley!

Become Inspired

by Annice Bradley Rockwell

A Transformed Tapestry

The season of fall is a time of perpetual change. The height of the summer has now given rise to the abundance and magic of fall. All around us nature provides reminders that there is beauty in letting go. As the days become shorter, we are often drawn inward, with a deep appreciation for what surrounds us. As we see the trees in our landscape transform into tapestries of amber and fiery red, we cannot help but feel grateful for one of the nature's most spectacular soulful displays.

Bringing in the Harvest

In our own country yards, we find similar abundance and change. Our gardens and fields are filled with huge pumpkins, butternut squash, acorn squash and produce that can be harvested and preserved to be enjoyed during the colder days to come. Tall cornstalks can be picked and nestled around our colonial Boston-style lamp post or used to fill our large country wagons or kegs in our outdoor fall displays. Our homegrown pumpkins and gourds can be picked at their peak and brought indoors to enhance the beauty of an early hewn trencher or an antique splint harvest basket. Bringing the splendor of the season into our homes lends a natural beauty to our days and is a country joy that we often crave on these brisk days of fall. Even small country pleasures like having the golden glow of a Pumpkin Bread or Colonial Apple Butter candle on your harvest table on a rainy fall day is a delight for our senses. And taking an afternoon to turn a bushel of our very own Macintosh apples into homemade apple pies as a surprise dessert for a Sunday family meal is yet another gift of the season of fall.

Capturing the Magic of Fall

Spending time outdoors in the cool country air is another way to embrace this season of change. A family day of raking leaves or making a country scarecrow from hay, a Buffalo plaid flannel shirt, overalls and straw hat is the perfect way to share in having fun and making memories. On a clear night of a harvest moon, friends and family can gather to enjoy a beautiful bonfire as the happy conversation brings everyone together in celebration of fall.

This season, embrace the country magic that fall always provides. As nature transitions to a grand display of wonder, let it ignite awe and inspiration. And as you reflect on the gifts of the season, share that abundance with those you hold dear.

--Annice Bradley Rockwell is an educator and owner of Pomfret Antiques. She is currently working on her book, *New England Girl*. NewEnglandGirl2012@hotmail.com



Where in Minnesota?

Somewhere in Minnesota the image to the right can be found.

Where is it?

(Answer on page 18 of this issue)



16th Annual 12 Days of Holiday Baking

Send in your favorite holiday baking recipes including cookies, cakes, appetizers, main dishes, etc!

Entries will be included in the November/December issue in the 12 Days of Holiday Baking special!

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Shifting Seasons bring New Beginnings

by Nancy Nash

Recently someone showed me a greeting card with a message that read "Every ending holds within the seeds of a new beginning." I tend to think of September and October as such a time. Summer is ending and fall is starting.

As a child, September marked the end of summer vacation and the opening of school. We kids had to be outfitted for our upcoming adventure in the land of learning, so Mom took us shopping for clothes. New shoes were a must. We went to a shoe store, where a salesman sat on a stool and used a small metal contraption to measure our feet. We tried on shoes, whereupon the salesman swiftly tied the laces, and we jumped up and walked. Mom and the salesman bent low and peered at our feet, squeezing the "toes" of the shoes to make sure there was room for growth. It was exciting when I took home a pair of red tie shoes one year, nicely polished and not yet marred by schoolyard scuff marks. That evening I proudly showed them off to Dad and was delighted when he admired them.

Next came supplies: pencils and erasers, rulers and paper and crayons. The school provided basics, but there might be homework, or maybe we would want to draw something at home for fun, like the horse in the meadow down the road or a flock of Canada geese flying south for winter.

Those first years, we learned the alphabet and started to read. Grammar made its appearance. We learned numbers and counting, addition and subtractions, division and multiplication. We learned to read books, sounding out words that were entirely new to us.

By the end of September, Mother Nature turned a page, and we slid into autumn. This was the season of harvest, which meant new foods appeared on the table. In October, pale yellow butternut squash replaced the bright yellow summer squash that had filled our plates. There were red apples to pick instead of strawberries and tomatoes. We looked for wild grapes along the fence line and crab apples on the slope of the pasture across the road. Mom and Grandma made crab apple preserves and canned them in glass containers while chatting about the local news. We looked forward to smearing delicious fruit from those jars on toast for breakfast for months to come.



The chill air beckoned us homeward at night, where we could curl up in homemade patchwork quilts or make ourselves cozy in warm wooden afghans. The change of season also awakened our sense of adventure. We hiked into the hills and hauled out skates and skis from the cellar to make sure we were prepared for winter sports.

Dark chilly evenings also invited storytelling, when we children would hear about the long-ago (to us!) hijinks of Dad and his siblings. My father told of a prank the kids in his neighborhood played on an eccentric old codger one such chilly October evening when the man was away from home. They managed to take a small buggy and suspend it from a large tree limb. My father, a boy at the time, thought they had gone too far. He quietly left the group, walked to the porch, and grabbed the man's cane, rhythmically striking the floorboards with it to simulate the sound of the old gentleman walking. Plunk! Plunk! Plunk! The other kids fled.

The next day, the neighborhood parents got wind of what had happened, the pranksters got rounded up, and the imperiled buggy got returned to its assigned spot in the dirt driveway. Perhaps a notherly autumn breeze passing through the yard wiped a few leaves off its surface. Surprisingly, it looked no worse for its adventure.

Thus, did our parents and grandparents share stories, rituals, and crafts with us, preserving the past and preparing us for future challenges and opportunities. As the kaleidoscope of seasons shifts and reveals new experiences, may you find the seeds of new beginnings to strengthen and inspire your journey in life.

2025 Nancy J. Nash

Nancy J. Nash is the author of Mama's Books: *An Oregon Trail Story*, and *Little Rooster's Christmas Eve*, each available on amazon.com. She has a B.A. in English composition from Mount Holyoke College and an M.F.A. in Writing for Children from Simmons College. She can be reached at nancynash341@gmail.com



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*I'm just here for
the pumpkin pie!*

Pumpkin Apple Cinnamon Mug Cake

Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp pumpkin puree
- 1 tbsp applesauce
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- pinch of nutmeg
- pinch of salt

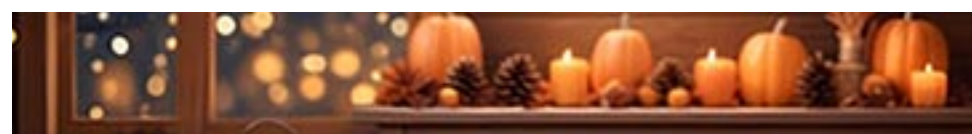


Photo by The Recipe Mingle

Directions:

1. In a microwave safe mug, mix flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.
2. Stir in pumpkin puree, applesauce and oil until smooth.
3. Microwave on high for 1 minute 15 seconds to 1 minute 30 seconds.
4. Let cool for 1 minute.
5. Top with powdered sugar, whipped cream, cinnamon and/or chopped nuts.

Recipe by The Recipe Mingle



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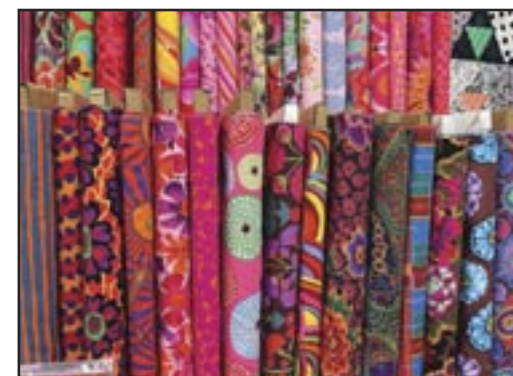
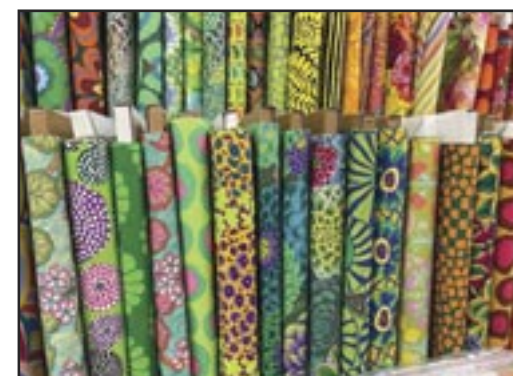


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Piecing Life Together

by Barbara Polston

Traveling

Most of us, I believe, plan to travel, whether that's for business, family obligations or pleasure. I'm planning a trip to visit my oldest daughter and will be flying. In addition to all the things that need to be packed – clothing, toiletries and the like – whenever I travel, I spend quite a bit of time thinking about what I will be bringing along to fill spare moments.

There is always a book or two to read on the plane. On this trip, I'm bringing the latest selection of my book club. I expect I will be done with the reading and ready for our meeting, occurring the evening after I return home.

What seems to occupy most of my thoughts is what sewing or crafting project will come along. There are several things that must be considered. One of the first things is the size of the project. With airlines charging for additional bags or too much weight, this is important. Currently, I have some finishing handwork that needs to be done on two good-size quilt projects. Either would take up quite a bit of valuable suitcase space or require a second suitcase

and additional baggage charges. Shipping the projects ahead of time seems like an unnecessary expense and risks them getting lost in transit, going or coming back. Neither of those projects seem like good options for this trip but would be strong contenders if I were driving. If I had a quilting project that could be broken down into small units of handwork, such as an English Paper Piecing project, that would be a good choice. Unfortunately, I don't have such a project planned for the near future, so that won't work either.

As luck would have it, I am ready to start a new counted cross stitch project. I was gifted another embroidery project, Japanese sashiko, that is ready to go and I am anxious to try. Both projects fit nicely in my embroidery bag and won't take up very much space in my suitcase. These will be coming along with me, giving me plenty of things to work on while I'm away and relaxing with my daughter. She is thinking she will work on some embroidery projects while I'm there, a plan we are calling mother-daughter parallel crafting. She was gifted with the same Japanese sashiko kit and I'm wondering if we will truly be in parallel, working on the same project but bringing our individual interpretations to the work. I am looking forward to a bit of a surprise.

Safe travels! Happy stitching!

©Barbara Polston, July 2025. Barbara is the author of *Quilting with Doilies: Inspiration, Techniques, and Projects* (Schiffer Press, 2015) and a series of children's books inviting young children to share in *The Adventures of Puppy Brian* (www.puppybrian.com). Barbara lives in Tucson, Arizona where she has failed at retirement, but is getting more time for sewing in a variety of forms. Contact Barbara at barbarapolstonquilter@gmail.com.



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I Love Fall Table Runner

by Deb Heatherly

Do you start counting the days midsummer until you can pull out your fall decorations? I certainly do! There's something comforting about the oranges, yellows, golds and reds of my favorite season. My front porch features mums, sunflowers, scarecrows, pumpkins and of course, an abundance of leaves. I love collecting garlands made of silk leaves and additional single leaves to mix in with all the décor. The entire look always makes me stand back and smile.

Once the outside is complete its time to do a little decorating inside. This year I designed a quick and easy table runner to add to my seasonal display and I'm happy to share that pattern with you.

For 4 blocks you will need:

- 1/3 yd. Light Background (or a variety of light backgrounds)
- 1 FQ each Red, Gold, Yellow, Orange

From each FQ of red, gold, yellow, orange, cut:

- (3) 3 1/2" squares, (1) 3" square, (2) 4" squares for HST, (1) 1" x 5 1/2"

Light background:

- Cut (1) 3 1/2" x WOF strip. Sub-cut (8) 3 1/2" squares
- Cut (1) 4" x WOF strip. Sub-cut (8) 4" squares for HST

Backing 1 yd.

For traditional binding

- Cut (3) 2 1/2" x WOF strips OR use a pillow turn method that requires no binding.

Directions:

- Draw a diagonal line on the back of the 4" light background squares.
- Pair right sides together with the red, gold, yellow, and orange 4" squares.
- Sew 1/4" from the line on both sides of the line. Cut on the line to yield (4) HST of each color. Press seams toward the color.
- Trim to 3 1/2".



For leaf stem:

- Cut (4) of the light background 3 1/2" squares diagonally 1x to yield (8) triangles.
- Center and sew on opposite sides of the 1" x 5 1/2" red, gold, yellow and orange strips. Press seams toward light background.



- Trim to 3 1/2" making sure the corners with red, gold, yellow and orange are centered.



- Make 4 blocks as shown pressing seams as indicated by the arrows. One of each color. Blocks should measure 9 1/2".



- Stagger the leaves and sew the blocks together as shown.



Make and use traditional binding OR pillow turn the runner. To pillow turn, place backing (right side down) on top of the runner, then place batting on top of the backings. Sew all the way around the runner leaving a 4" opening in the center of one of the blocks to turn.

Trim the backing and batting before turning through the opening and trim the corners to reduce bulk in the points.

Hand stitch the opening closed and press. Top stitch 1/4" from the edge all the way around if desired.

Deb Heatherly is a designer for Creative Grids® rulers and the author of eight popular pattern books. Creative Grids® fans are invited to join her Facebook group, "Grids Girls," for tips and inspiration, and two free mysteries each year. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/7704296498004571>.

Shop Owners are invited to join her group just for you, "Grids Girls for Quilt Shop Owners Only" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/273593657256524>. Visit Deb's website at www.Debcatsnquilts.com

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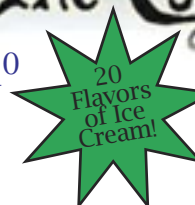
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Saving Grandmother's Treasures

by Janet M Bair

I inherited some lovely "whitework," machine embroidered, small tablecloths after my 95-year-old mother died this year. I found them wrapped in tissue paper in her bottom dresser drawer. Edged in eyelet, the cloths were beautiful but badly yellowed and stained.



One of my quilting friends told me how to get them white again. Her daughter is a chef and they clean their chef outfits this way. I boiled a large pot of water, took it off the stove, and dissolved Oxiclean into the water. I then soaked the tablecloths for twenty minutes. They came out really clean! The fabric appears to be heavy cotton sheeting, although I am not sure if this method would work on a more fragile fabric such as muslin.

As I was stirring the cloths with a large wooden spoon in the boiling water, I felt transported back in time. For so many other women over the years, "wash day" involved heating water in a large kettle outdoors on an open fire and stirring the clothes with a stick to get them clean. I have the luxury of a glass topped electric stove.

I am sure these cloths were my Italian grandmother's so they are almost a hundred years old. After raising eight children, she left very few possessions behind. Rather than put them back in a drawer, I decided to collage/quilt them into a wall hanging. I have limited wall space, so I had to cut the best pieces to keep (a few stains didn't come out).

I love collages. I decided to hand stitch a crocheted doily onto the wall hanging, since I had several doilies from my other grandmother. Then I cut up two stained handkerchiefs edged with pink tatting. I added a folded lace-edged handkerchief in one corner. This will give my daughters and granddaughters an idea of the lovely embroidery you seldom see any more.

When I first showed the cloths to my quilting friends, we weren't sure if the embroidery was done by hand or by machine. The stitches are so even it appears to be machine done. I decided to do a little research to see if that was possible.

White embroidery thread on white fabric has been around since the 1500s but it became very popular in the late 1700s and even more so in the early 1800s. Hand sewn cottage piecwork provided a small income for women in Ireland, Scotland, France, and India. A variety of laces were made for women's accessories such as collars, chemisettes, bonnet frills, caps, and underwear. A most popular item was a baby's robe.

India was a primary source of cottons and embroidered goods during the Georgian and early Regency periods. But with the Industrial Revolution, the United Kingdom took over as a source of cotton textiles. A hand embroidery machine was invented in Switzerland in 1828. By the 1850s, machine embroidery was equal to hand embroidery.

I think we take machine made lace for granted today, because in the past if you wanted a beautiful trim for your clothing, you had to make it yourself or find a talented person to do it for you.

No stories remain from my family regarding what was saved. I can only guess. My Italian grandmother died when I was nine. But I am pretty sure the hand tatting on the handkerchiefs was done by my other grandmother. I am planning on showing this piece in our spring quilt show so that others can enjoy the beauty of white embroidery on white, a lovely art which should not be forgotten.


Recipe: 5 Layer Hot Dish
submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 lbs hamburger (seasoned with salt and pepper)
- 4 sliced large potatoes
- 2 large onions (sliced)
- 1 can French green beans
- 1 can cheddar cheese soup
- 1 soup can of water (1/2 can)

Directions:

Arrange ingredients in order listed. Bake 90+ minutes in 350° oven.



The Portrait

by Wayne M. Bosman

I've been thinking about Mom. Specifically, about maybe having a portrait done of her. Which version of her is the question.

Definitely not the 104 year old version. That would only show the worn and weakened one. The one who has lived so much and so long that time has become a fluid mystery instead of a march of even beats that one could even dance to. At this point, her eyes often have a pensive look and one can tell that she is thinking of someone long gone or something that happened so long ago that the details of the event require effort to reconstruct. When she speaks, it is clear that at times the reconstruction did no go well. Names of people she has loved intermingle with those she still does love, and my father and I are in one sentence, only to be replaced in the next by my grandchild and then my brother's stepson, but it is still the same story being told. No. A portrait of the 104-year-old Mom would not be fair to her memory.

How about how she was when I was a child? With four sons and a daughter, she was always busy with something, yet I can picture her sitting at the telephone table talking to her mother. We would time their calls by how many TV shows it took. I loved sitting in the kitchen after drying dishes talking to her about everything and anything. Those years are a blur to me now, and it would be hard to capture one image for a true portrait. Any pictures of those times would also have Dad in them, as they were very much a team.

Before my siblings and I arrived, Mom was still the same person, she just wasn't "Mom" yet. I have seen pictures of her from her high school years when you could see the first glimpses of the beautiful woman and person she would become. She had a wholesome beauty and the same eyes and smile that showed up in her pictures as a toddler. Part of the portrait is definitely from those years. But not all.

I've seen those eyes looking back. The years fall away when she tells the story of meeting Dad. Her best friend, Margie, didn't approve of him at first because he drove too fast. Mom was smitten. He was tall and good looking. He smoked a pipe, just like her father. Mom's eyes are young again when she talks about those early years, watching Dad pitch in semi-pro softball games and going fishing with him out at the lake.

I can see pictures of her driving the tractor digging the basement for the house that she has lived in for almost 80 years. She shakes her head-"Can you imagine ME driving a tractor!?" Of course we all can.

She has been doing what needed to be done for her whole life. When Dad opened the monument business she became the bookkeeper and salesperson. She spent countless hours on the telephone comforting widows, some of whom would still be calling her 20 years later just to talk. She visited the old people at nursing homes, never seeming to notice that the people she was visiting were younger than she was. She attended funerals of her friends, and eventually of her friends' children. She buried children and grandchildren of her own.

So the portrait. Life isn't really made for portraits, is it?

Just as a drop of water is part of a wave and a wave is part of an ocean, we can't separate out one moment from a life and then say "This is that person." As my Irish forbears would say, "It is, but it isn't."



Wayne Bosman is a retired auto mechanic living in Cape Carteret, NC



Search for the underlined words in the recipe in the word search below!

Amish Beef and Noodles

recipe courtesy of Delish

- 4 tbsp vegetable oil, divided
2 pounds beef roast, cut into 2" cubes
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
4 tsp kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 large yellow onions, finely chopped
8 cups low-sodium beef broth, divided
12oz wide egg noodles

In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat 2 tablespoons oil. Place beef in a large bowl and toss with flour, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Add half of the beef to pot and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on both sides, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer beef to a plate; repeat with remaining 2 tablespoons oil and beef. Reduce heat to medium. Cook onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt, stirring occasionally until just tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Return beef to pot and add 6 cups of broth. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until beef is tender enough to shred with a fork, 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Transfer beef to a large plate and shred with 2 forks into bite-size pieces. Pour remaining 2 cups of broth into the same pot and bring to a boil. Add noodles and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 7 to 8 minutes. Return beef to pot, toss to combine, and season with remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons salt as needed. Divide beef and noodles among bowls. Serve topped with lots of pepper.



Recipe: Tuna Bumsteads

submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 1/4 lb American cheese, cubed
- 3 hard boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 (7oz) can tuna
- 2 tbsp green pepper
- 2 tbsp onion
- 2 tbsp olives
- 2 tbsp sweet pickles
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together. Fill 12 buns. Wrap in foil. Warm in 250° oven for 30 minutes.



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Stories of a Farm Wife

by Tammy Page

Autumn—My Favorite Season



Do you remember when we layed at the end of our twin beds, on top of the covers with a fan blowing in our faces? I was 6 in 1966 and I remember the August and September temps of the day still reached well over 90 and did not cool down by bedtime. My sister and I would put or baby doll pj's on and lay side by side in our twin beds. We would put our pillows at the end of the beds in hopes the air coming in through the screens would be cooler than the air in our room.

We started out talking into the fan making the rumbling sound it makes when you talk near the blades. Our fan had a protective front and back and was made of metal back then. No doubt it also had a wobble and it made a gosh awful rattling noise. The noise would lull us to sleep. But, of course, we had to sing some songs and giggle for a while before mom would come to the door for the umpteenth time to remind us it was time to go to sleep. We would toss and turn and get up a hundred times to re-arrange our pillows just right so that our faces could lay on them at the right height and still it was way too hot and muggy to go right to sleep. By this time, mom would come back into our room and threaten to make us go back to the head of our beds if we didn't quiet down and go to sleep.

In extreme temperatures, our parents just might let us sleep in their room with the window air conditioner, after we promised to go right to sleep. Sometimes on a rare occasion, we were allowed to sleep in the living room where we had a new Westinghouse window air conditioner that cooled the entire living and dining room. We thought we were rich!

Most of our friends were in the same boat, only having a fan or small window air conditioner. It was rare to visit home with central air back then. If one of our friends had central air conditioning, we thought they were millionaires.

By the time morning came around and we had slept in our hot rooms, our hair would be damp and looked like Bozo the Clown. Those days my mom had to put my hair up in a ponytail for school. Schools were hot back then too, but thank goodness my school, #82, had 2 sets of wall to wall windows in each classroom that could be opened. Sometimes, if were lucky, only sometimes, our teacher would bring a fan in from home.

This Indiana heat would continue well into October when some other parts of the country were already getting snow. Needless to say, when the cooler temps came, most of us were thrilled. I was especially happy when bedtime was not so miserable. So, I have declared autumn my favorite season where you can leave the windows open, feel a cool breeze and go back to sleeping at the head of your bed.

© 2025 Tammy Page. Tammy Page writes from her family farm in Indiana.

Happy Halloween!



Exploring the World of International Quilt Festivals: A Global Journey of Inspiration Part 4 of 4

by Kim Caskey of Kim Caskey Tours

Pour l'Amour du Fil, Nantes, France, is a celebrated event that draws quilt lovers and textile artists from around the world. Held annually in a convention centre, this French quilt festival is renowned for its blend of high-quality, unique exhibitions, workshops and a vibrant marketplace. The event highlights a stunning array of quilts and textile art, with exhibitors offering everything from traditional quilts to contemporary designs that push the boundaries of creativity. The show's curated



exhibits are often country-based and feature the finest in quilting, with pieces often reflecting diverse international influences and showcasing the latest trends in textile art. Visitors can expect to see a beautiful variety of quilts, including hand-stitched, machine-embroidered and art quilts, all displayed in thoughtfully arranged galleries which inspire and captivate.

In addition to the exhibits, **Pour l'Amour du Fil** offers a bustling vendor area where quilters and textile enthusiasts can find unique fabrics, patterns, tools and notions, many of which are exclusive to the show. The market has a distinctly French flair, with French designers and artisans presenting their own collections of high-quality materials, including specialty threads, lace and fabric. The show also features workshops and lectures led by renowned textile artists, providing visitors with the opportunity to learn new techniques and gain insights into the world of quilting and embroidery. With its warm, inviting atmosphere and rich focus on textile arts, **Pour l'Amour du Fil** is a must-attend event for anyone passionate about quilting, fabric and the art of stitching.

The European Patchwork Meeting is a one-of-a-kind quilt festival held annually in the picturesque Alsace region of France, known for its stunning medieval villages and charming landscapes. This unique event takes place in various venues scattered across the villages of Alsace, transforming historic buildings, museums and local halls into vibrant galleries for textile art. The festival's setting is as much a part of the experience as the quilts themselves, with attendees wandering through cobblestone streets and exploring centuries-old structures, while discovering a dazzling array of quilts and textile artworks. The festival offers a free, and very well-organized, shuttle-bus system with a series of stops at each village, allowing one to easily visit all five villages and exhibits. Each venue offers a different atmosphere, creating a dynamic and immersive experience which combines the beauty of the region with the creativity of quilt artists from around the world.



The festival brings together quilters from across Europe and beyond, presenting an eclectic mix of traditional, contemporary and innovative quilts. Exhibits are often curated by theme or artist, and visitors are treated to a visual feast of color, texture and technique. In addition to the quilt displays, the European Patchwork Meeting features a range of workshops and demonstrations, offering quilters of all levels the chance to learn new skills and techniques from international experts. With its stunning setting, diverse quilt exhibitions and the opportunity to immerse oneself in the culture of the Alsace region, the European Patchwork Meeting is truly a one-of-a-kind event in the global quilting calendar.

Japanese Quilt Festivals: Japan has long been a major player in the quilt world, with a rich tradition of quilting and textile arts that continue to evolve in exciting ways. The once iconic Tokyo International Great Quilt Festival, which was held annually at the Tokyo Dome, was the largest of its kind in Asia and a must-visit event for quilters worldwide. Unfortunately, this festival was discontinued after the pandemic, however its legacy lives on in the vibrant quilt scene across Japan. In its place, several smaller but equally impressive quilt festivals emerged, each offering unique experiences and celebrating the artistry of quilting in their own distinctive ways.

Today, Japan's quilt festivals continue to attract quilt enthusiasts and artists from around the world with events held in major cities like Tokyo, Yokohama and Kyoto. The festivals feature an incredible array of quilts, from traditional Japanese patterns and techniques to contemporary and avant-garde designs. Exhibits often highlight quilts that blend cultural heritage with modern sensibilities, making for a visually striking experience. In addition to the quilt displays, workshops and lectures are a central feature of these festivals, allowing attendees to learn from Japanese quilting masters and discover new techniques, such as the country's famed Sashiko stitching. With a focus on craftsmanship, artistry and innovation, the new wave of quilt festivals in Japan continue to captivate and inspire quilters from all corners of the globe.



From the cozy charm of community shows to the spectacular displays at global events, quilt festivals celebrate the artistry and shared passion of quilters worldwide. Each event offers a unique perspective on this beloved art form, whether you are looking for inspiration, education or simply a deeper appreciation of the global quilting community, these quilt festivals are a must-visit for anyone interested in the global quilting community.

Kim Caskey, who is based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a professional longarm quilter and owner of Kim Caskey Tours. Kim hosts specialized textile-based tours in numerous international destinations with unique and exclusive textile visits and activities creating memorable experiences for quilters, stitchers, their family and friends. Everyone is welcome on Kim's tours! www.kimcaskey.ca/tours, kim@kimcaskey.ca, 1-780-288-9008.



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Cafeteria Prophecy

by Kerri Habben Bosman

The old saying "Many a true word is said in jest," came true in a special way for me. For that I am extremely grateful.

But first, I must set the stage. It begins with the cafeteria my family and I went to for many years. K&W Cafeteria is a regional business begun in 1935 and is still in existence today, although only a few remain. The effects of pandemic were not kind to this breed of restaurant and much of the cafeteria business now leans more into the catering industry.



When I was growing up, however, there was a K&W a few miles from our house. It was often where we'd go out to eat. Of course, these were the days this was more of a special occasion than a regular occurrence. We'd get dressed up to go and dining somewhere other than home, which seemed both comfortable and exotic all at the same time.

I loved the K&W. There was the tantalizing aroma of the food as you walked in. During the wait in the sometimes long line, I would think about what I wanted and ponder trying something new. Yet, I almost always got the chicken and dumplings, green beans, and chocolate crème pie for dessert.

All of the choices spread out was stunning to see, but ultimately the K&W's charm was more about the servers themselves. There they were, over steaming plates of food but they still usually ladled out a "here you go, sugar" or "you enjoy that, honey."

I am not sure how this happened with it being a cafeteria, but once in a while we brought food home. Both my grandfather and great-aunt were in wheelchairs and they'd let us skip the line to get them settled at the table. I especially loved the times I was the one to deliver their food to them. At any rate, somehow, we ended up with a table knife engraved with K&W.

So, at last, we cut to the heart of this article. The K& W knife that foretold my future. That assertion might be a little fanciful on my part, but this is my story and I'm sticking to it.

For many of my single years, nearly every time I took that knife out of the drawer, I would say to my mother that I needed to find a man whose name started with "W." Our dates would be to the K&W. Each visit we could acquire a fork here, a spoon there and by the time we married, we'd have a full set of our own personalized silverware. For nearly two decades I didn't date anyone because somehow no one ever compelled me enough. In another time I would have been called a "spinster." So, my knife joke was a nod to my inner hope that one day the right person would come along and I would recognize him when he did.

I want to assure you that I did not choose Wayne just because his name begins with a "W." In fact, I didn't even know his name when I first saw the gentleness in his eyes and the warmth of his smile. And my intuition kicked in at the right time, just as I'd hoped.

After six years together and just celebrating our fifth wedding anniversary, we still have our very own personalized knife.

The rest of the prophecy didn't come to pass. One, we are not kleptomaniacs. And two, we never really "dated" at all. We sensed the most vital trait within each other—we both love with the same devotion and focus. With that awareness, we quickly melded into the loveliness of ordinary days spent together and with family.

And actually, we have never eaten together at a K& W.

Kerri Habben Bosman is a writer living in Cape Carteret, NC. Her email is 913jeeves@gmail.com

Recipe: Bean Hot Dish
 submitted by Patti Lee Bock

Ingredients:

- 1 lb hamburger
- 1/2 lb bacon
- 1 onion
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/2 tsp mustard (dry or regular)
- 1 can kidney beans, drained
- 1 can butter beans, drained
- 1 can pork & beans
- salt and pepper

Directions:

Cut bacon into small pieces and brown, then brown onion in with the bacon. Brown hamburger in the same pan. Mix in the rest. Bake for 1 hour at 350°.

Note: You can also use a crock pot



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by Kathy J. Sotak

Try This Simple Antidote



I grew up in a house with a heartbeat. At the center of the beat were two singing parents. My mother was the primary music teacher and beautiful singer; my father on the other hand sang to be silly – making mundane chores go quicker. The beat was enabled by two pianos, an organ, guitar, ukulele, flute, saxophone, trumpet and a big bin of tambourine-like joys.

Although they had a tough, around-the-clock farm and ranch life, my parents' smiles prevailed more than any pain. The current of the house was love. This current fueled the heartbeat of the house, which was a ribbon of music – on the radio, through our fingers or the vibration of our voices.

I wonder where my song is today. I now stop to listen to the heartbeat of my own household. I hear the clang of video games, the bang of the kitchen cupboards or personal playlist on private headphones. Rarely do I sing or crank the volume on my happy playlists anymore. When did that stop? Was it out of respect for my husband's different musical interests? Was it to avoid sounding archaic to my teenager with more trendy taste? Or was it my own doing, walking further away from the fire in my heart?

It may be time to turn the dial on the frequency band. What if I started singing to be silly or humming my heart? Would the current of my house change? Would daily struggles be dissolved? Would peace pierce through our obstacles?

"In many shamanic societies, if you came to a medicine person complaining of being disheartened, dispirited or depressed, they would ask one of four questions:

1. When did you stop dancing?
2. When did you stop singing?
3. When did you stop being enchanted by stories?
4. When did you stop being comforted by the sweet territory of silence?"

– Gabrielle Roth, founder of 5 Rhythms

There was another influential person in my youth who sang the same notes: Aunt Rosella. She lived just down the road from us and we saw her at least twice a week. She always had a smile on her face, usually accompanied by humming. Aunt Rosella hummed when she cleaned, hummed when she drove, hummed when she rolled dough.

Why was she humming? I've never asked her, to this day. Is this why she always gleamed a smile? Now that I think of it, I've never seen someone hum a tune with a frowning face.

"The medicine of the future will be music and sound." – Edgar Cayce

Scenes from history flash through my mind. I see a movie screen of those building the American Railroad singing the famous song, "I've been working on the railroad, all the live-long day." I see depictions of earlier times, with thousands of workers chanting in unison while they build great structures. I see tribal times, when we all sat around the fire, singing and drumming.

"If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration." – Nicola Tesla

Perhaps humming, drumming and singing is the antidote to the hardness of life. It's the soothing salve that vibrates away our pain. It's the original medicine that has been around since the birth of humanity.

I'll have to ask my Aunt Rosella about her why. What does she think about while she hums? Is it a prayer? Is she humming the gratitude for her blessings? Is she humming a ribbon of love to all who hears her sweet sound?

In the meantime, I'm giving it a go. Consider joining me in humming, drumming or singing. It's our own custom antidote, the original medicine to keep our heartbeat filled with love.





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Over the Teacup

Fall—A Season of Beauty

by Janet Young

Fall signifies the end of summer—with its' cooler temperatures, and longer nights. But it also brings a season of beauty with the changing of the leaves. A landscape of red, yellow, and gold leaves, beautifies our surroundings. And when the wind blows and swirls the leaves to the ground, it provides a play-ground for young and old alike to play in the leaves. If playing in the leaves is not your cup of tea, just walking over the crisp fallen leaves lets you know that fall has arrived.



With the cooler temperatures, you may find you are staying home more, wrapped in a cozy blanket or a warm sweater. To add to that coziness, now may be the time you light your first, of the season fire, in the fireplace.

With a warm, cozy atmosphere, you may find yourself reading a book or watching your favorite TV show, or football, while enjoying a mug of hot apple cider, or a mug of pumpkin latte'.

Because Fall is a transitional season, take advantage of this slower time and reflect on what or on whom you are thankful. By doing so, you will be in a better position to handle the upcoming holiday season, which we know to be pretty hectic. No matter how hard you try to keep the holidays on a low key, somehow it just doesn't turn out that way, for the majority of us that is.

Fall invites us to enjoy our harvest. Whether you raised your own food, or attend Farmers Markets, you will have an array of fresh fruits and vegetables to enjoy, as well as decorative touches. Pumpkins, gourds, even the leaves themselves can all be used to add decorative touches to our tables, on our mantles, or even outside by the front door. Who says Fall is only a season of beauty! Fall, also can have a dark side when we begin to prepare for Halloween, which just shows the versatility of this time of the year.

Before long the cold winds will blow. So, while you can enjoy the fleeting days of Fall, get outside and walk through a corn maze, or take a hay ride, and last but not least go to the pumpkin patch, and pick out a pumpkin or two.

And remember, Fall is a season of beauty!

© Janet Young is a Certified Tea and Etiquette Consultant, Co-Founder of Mid-Atlantic Tea Business Association, and prior owner of Over The Teacup

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM



Kindness is a type of behavior marked by acts
of Generosity, or Concern for Others...
without expecting praise, or reward in return.

Kindness holds special powers! It can improve relationships because it fosters trust and strengthens bonds between people. It enhances well-being.

An act of kindness can boost our own happiness and feelings of joy.

Kindness promotes empathy. It allows individuals to understand and share the feelings of others. As we change to another season and possibly change our daily schedules, it is an opportunity to change a few small things.

GIRLFRIEND WISDOM: Increase opportunities to be a little kinder each day. Life will be a little sweeter, relationships will become a little stronger, and more joy will enter your day! This wisdom comes from a perfect source:

"So in everything you do, do unto others as you would have them do to you." Seems pretty simple that we would like people to be kind to us so that's what we should be to them!

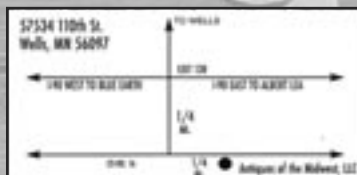
Joy & Blessings,

Jody

Girlfriend Wisdom is written and illustrated by Jody Houghton®.
Color files of this writing and artwork are available: www.JodyHoughtonDesigns.etsy.com

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**Life in Skunk Hollow**

by Julie A Druck

A Year with Jane Austen

This year being the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birthday, I was inspired to celebrate this lady and her outstanding works of literature. Over the last few months, I've taken to reading some of her novels that I hadn't read before, attending special Jane Austen events at libraries in our area, watching some of the films and British television productions of her works, and listening to historical fiction based on her life. I've taken a virtual tour of Austen's home in Chawton where she crafted the majority of her books and have been reading biographies of her, as well as a compilation of some of the letters that she wrote to others. And last but not least, culminating with her December 16th birthday, I hope to have a special tea party commemorating the event—I'm sure my granddaughters would be happy to attend.

Not only do I love the language and themes of Austen's writings, but I'm fascinated with the time period in which her works were set—that of the Regency Period from 1811 to 1820. Through her books and the period movies I've watched, I am utterly fascinated by a radically different lifestyle than our own very casual culture. I don't wish to discount the difficulties of the period relating to the many issues surrounding class distinction, the plight of the poor, and the legal limitations that greatly affected women. But I can't help admiring the beautiful empire waist dresses, graceful dance steps, gorgeous country estates, and the genteel manners of the period.

As I've immersed myself in the world and works of Jane Austen, I've been pondering some of the themes and patterns that have shown themselves to be noticeably prevalent in her stories:

- Manners matter. The beauty of the bows and curtsies in greetings, the discretion in conversation and respectful demeanor, and the chivalrous behavior of gentleman make me wish those things were more prevalent today. Oh, of course, there were (and are) the manipulative George Wickhams and unprincipled John Willoughbys, but their contrasting presence clearly highlights the beauty that's found in the thoughtfulness and kindness of the words and manners of most of her characters.

- Beauty is more than skin deep. Though I love the light and flowing dresses of the period, as well as the curling hairstyles, what makes my favorite Austen heroines most beautiful in my eyes are their characters. Elinor Dashwood is my favorite—her simple physical beauty is greatly enhanced by a gentle spirit and selfless devotion towards her loved ones. Jane Bennet has beauty of face but her kind heart that is always looking at the best in others is what draws me to her. Contrast those characters with the arrogant Mrs. Elton and the spoiled Emma Woodhouse (before her humbling reality check in self-awareness), and it's clear the best kind of beauty is found deeper than on the surface.

- Simple pleasures provide joy and contentment. I never tire of reading of the pastimes of Austen characters. From strawberry picking parties to needlework by the fire, from long walks along country lanes to holidays by the seaside, the pastimes of her characters remind me that one doesn't need to attend a fancy ball (though they had those, too!) in order to find pleasure.

So, I will continue my celebration of all things Austen. More importantly, I hope some of what's best about her characters will rub off on me. For who doesn't want to be more courteous, more beautiful, and more content?

Thanks, Jane—and Happy Birthday.

Julie Druck is from York, Pennsylvania, and writes from her farm in Skunk Hollow. She'd welcome your comments at thedrucks@netzero.com.



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Recipe: Zucchini Sausage Casserole
submitted by Shirley Ross**Ingredients:**

- 1/4 cup mild bulk sausage
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 4-5 cups zucchini, diced & peeled
- 1/2 cup cracker crumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded (plus more for topping)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp oregano
- Dash of garlic salt
- Dash of pepper

Directions:

Brown the meat with the onion and drain. Add zucchini, cracker crumbs, egg, cheese and spices. Place in a 2 quart greased baking dish and bake at 350° for about 45 minutes or until zucchini is tender. Then top with cheese near the end.



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This month in Minnesota History

September 2, 1952: Doctors Floyd Lewis and C. Walton Lillehei perform the first hypothermic open-heart surgery, at the University Hospital in Minneapolis. During the procedure, the patient, a five-year-old girl, has her body temperature lowered to 79 degrees. She recovers, leaving the hospital eleven days later.

October 15, 1891: Concordia College opens in Moorhead with a class of twelve students. At first a high school, Concordia would begin to offer college-level courses in 1907.

From The Minnesota Book of Days (Minnesota Historical Society Press)

Back-To-School Memories

by Judy Sharer

Whether still in school or a graduate from years ago, everyone has back-to-school memories!

In the small town where I grew up in Western Pennsylvania, my parents knew everyone, primarily because my father was the elementary principal and my mother a third-grade teacher. As you can imagine, I couldn't get away with anything.

Although summer seemed short to us, our parents were always ready for us to return to school. Back to school shopping started early. I had to try on all my old clothes to see if they still fit and then it was trudging store to store for outfits and shoes. In my town in the 60s until 7th grade all of the girls were required to wear dresses. I wished I were a boy so I could wear pants. In 8th grade the rules changed and girls were allowed to wear the new popular style pantsuits. In 9th grade, we were allowed to wear denim jeans. Finally, I could sit on the floor and feel comfortable! And those mandatory one-piece gym uniforms! Not very attractive.

Each new year brought the anticipation of a new teacher, new books, and a new classroom. I looked forward to catching up with old friends and making new friends, but the first day back always tied my stomach in knots.

In my small town, I walked about five blocks to elementary school. Then when I got old enough, nine or ten I believe, I was allowed to ride my bike. Actually, it was my sister's hand-me-down bike, but I was glad to have a set of wheels.

After school, my girlfriend and I would stop at a local gas station/store on our way home if we had a few pennies in our pocket. We would get penny candy to eat to tide us over until supper. And bottles of soda pop were taken from a large cooler with a sliding lid and a cap opener in the front.

For the most part, I liked school, especially the year I was old enough to get my driver's permit. I didn't have my own car, but lucky for me my siblings were out of the house by then and I could use the family car, with permission of course, when I really wanted to go somewhere.

High school brought school dances, evening football games and other sports, my first real boyfriend, and then on to college. While exciting, college had its own ups and downs. Finding and buying my textbooks was stressful the first few times. Finding the right building and classroom and being able to get to the next class clear across campus on time was nerve-wracking. Keeping my grades up so my parents would continue to pay my tuition always hung over my head. When my grades dropped one term, finding a job to help me pay my own tuition was an experience. And then there was juggling my time between campus life and studying while living at home.

Wow! Sometimes, I'm amazed I survived my school years, but when you're young you don't let anything stand in your way. Hopefully you're fondly thinking of some of the things you did in school right now. Maybe this walk down memory lane will prompt you to pick up the phone and call an old school friend to share a memory or just to say hello and reminisce.

© Judy Sharer is the author of a historical Civil War era romance series titled *A Plains Life*, published by The Wild Rose Press. Book One, *Settler's Life*, Book Two, *Second Chance Life*, Book Three, *Civil War Life* and Book Four, *Love Challenged Life* are available wherever on-line books and eBooks are sold. Look for her newest title *Secrets in Room Four* coming this winter. Visit Judy's website for more details. judysharp.com



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Recipe: S'mores Bars
submitted by June Becklin

Ingredients:

- 1 box graham crackers
- 16 oz mini marshmallows
- 4 Hershey's Bar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter

Directions:

Lightly spray 9x13" baking pan with non-stick cooking spray. Break the graham crackers into smaller pieces. Place in a bowl. Break the chocolate bars into smaller pieces. Place in a separate bowl. In a large pot over low heat, combine the butter and all of the marshmallows except reserve 1/3 cup for later. Stir until the mixture is melted. Remove the pan from the heat. Add in the graham crackers and stir to mix. Add in the chocolate pieces and remaining marshmallows, stir to mix. evenly press the s'mores bars into the pan and allow them to cool

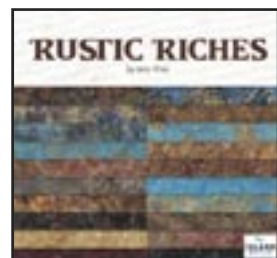


Kissed Quilts

by Marlene Oddie
Rustic Riches

At fall harvest time in the wheatfields around here, the amber waves of grain have their own beauty. I decided to work with this new collection from Lumin Fabrics, Island Batik Division, called Rustic Riches and design this Prairie Stars quilt.

This batik collection seemed just perfect to make into a quilt that some how represented the beautiful amber tones in our local wheatfields and the stars that harvest it.



This is broken down into two blocks – a star block and a single irish chain block along with sashings and cornerstones. I've selected a Neutral called Mocha as the background. This pattern includes how to do a faux piped binding. I used the teal as the accent in the faux piping and it just gives it an extra touch of elegance.

I hope you've been enjoying the designs this year, I've got one more to share before year end.

Ask at your local quilt shop that carries Island Batik fabrics for these fabrics and pattern. You can also find this pattern and some fabrics while supplies last here at KISSed Quilts.



Marlene Oddie (marlene@kissedquilts.com) is an engineer by education, project manager by profession and now a quilter by passion in Grand Coulee, WA at her quilt shop, KISSed Quilts. She quilts for hire on a Gammill Optimum Plus but especially enjoys designing quilts and assisting in the creation of a meaningful treasure for the recipient. Fabric, patterns, kits and templates are available at <http://www.kissedquilts.com>. Follow Marlene's adventures via <http://www.facebook.com/kissedquilts> and <https://www.instagram.com/marlene.kissedquilts>

Life on My Farm

by Donna Jo Copeland, farmeress

Thankful for Fall

Beyond the purple hazy seas
Of summer's utmost mysteries
There lies a land long lost to me
The land of used to be...



Written by James Whitcomb Riley over a century ago, the poem memorized in the 5th grade, comes alive for me every late summer.

Especially so now that I'm 75, sipping iced tea on hot afternoons the long-ago days bring smiles. Late summer, early fall for country kids were filled with simple pleasures, and chores of course.

No idleness as garden produce needed canned, hay baled, fences repaired, getting ready for the coming winter. And then there was school starting the day after Labor Day. Gosh the summers went by quickly.

City kids just don't understand the magic of quiet, crickets, lightning bugs, soft breezes. Sadly, with the isolation and technology of today, few people embrace simple farm life, live the magic.

The air and sky at summers end change. Cornflower blue carries white fluffy clouds on the horizon. A hint of damp leaves begins to waft on evening breezes. Even the sunshine is softer, more golden.

In this crazy unsure world, my wee farm is my refuge, my magic place. I can lose myself in caring, watching my animals. Always lots of fiber work needing done. The looms and spinning wheels isolate me from the chaos.

The sheep are newly sheared and now their fleeces need processed. Goats and bunnies will be sheared one more time. Fences need checked. House and barn need attention. And this year I have some late chicks...brooder house to be repaired and varmint proofed.

As I have Fall shows and the Wool Shed is open until Christmas, woolen goods need to be made for sale. Looms and spinning wheels will hum, dyepots simmer. And I am so thankful the brutal heat of summer has eased. I love working in jeans and flannel shirts. It's my fashion statement.

As much as I love to spin and weave, rug hooking has claimed the top spot for now. Finding new ways to incorporate wool, different fabrics, textures in my designs. For me my hooking has very few rules, let's me experiment, combining techniques. My very soul is excited when I work with wools produced right here. The wool production team seems proud too.

Pride in things made from your own realm, well made, sustainably produced, honoring the planet, caring for Mother Nature. We all should find a path, a way to make, do, and be proud. Be kinder to ourselves, the planet, each other.

Remember the hippie motto: Peace, Love.

Maybe I'm regressing. Might even dig out my old bell bottom jeans, sandals (remember Dr Schools wood sandals, I still have mine), and tie dye shirt to wear. Who knows what I might find in the back of the closet or North room? Mysteries?? Memories?

Let's make this fall season one of love, peace, mystery and thankfulness. Be a little more tolerant, more caring. Find a creative outlet, maybe rug hooking. Wool has that awesome ability to soothe, calm, connect with other wool users. And then there are those wonderful sheep, their gentle eyes and that luscious fleece.

MOM'S APPLE DUMPLINGS

Recipe for pie crust, rolled into a rectangle, cut into 3" x 5" rectangles. Butter each piece.

Peel and core 2 or 3 apples, cut into 4 or 6 slices. Put a slice on each dough piece, liberally sprinkle cinnamon sugar. Roll up, place in greased 9" x 13" pan. When all dumplings are made, sprinkle brown sugar over them, add about 1 cup of water. Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes. Serve with homemade ice cream.



Donna Jo Copeland writes from her farm, Breezy Manor, Mooresville, Indiana where she tends her flock and creates art from the wool. Being the 14th generation of farm owner/operator. Donna Jo brings alive the struggles of farm life.

Pieces From My Heart

by Jan Keller

Autumn Leaves

The distant horizon greets me as I walk through a landscape painted with the rich warm tones of gold, crimson and bronze. The gentle autumn breeze, even on a sunny day, possesses an unmistakable chill.

Overhead, the leaves clinging desperately to barren branches rustle a melody of greeting as I pass. With an accompanying percussion rhythm, the brittle fallen leaves scrunch into countless dried bits as they cushion my steps.

I like the gentle, warm and sunny autumn days known as Indian Summer. The out-of-doors beckons. I long to take respite from the busyness of day-to-day routine to recreate my being.

My lungs expand with exhilarating fresh brisk air. The stress, worry and frets of the day are exhaled, releasing me from their exhausting drain on my energy.

Hidden in the grass out under a big willow tree I spot a cottontail. With lop-ears tucked down close to his body, he blends in with the natural terrain. Except for his large, acutely perceptive and frightened eyes, I might not see him.

Once I'm past, the furry animal relaxes his tense muscles and hops off in the opposite direction.

High overhead in a large oak tree, a pair of squirrels bicker at one another. I smile and think, "Those two must be married."

The red robin is gone, but a V-formation of high-flying geese honk their way across a clear azure sky. Their migration south is a predictable sight of the season.

Autumn can appear a dreaded drab time, focusing on death, dying and the stark reality of the severe elements. The wildflower blossoms lose their bright blush and the wild grasses are no longer green. Their apparent life force has been snuffed out by a freezing blast from the north wind.

Survival of the fittest is the governing role of nature. Through the long cold winter, the old or weakened animals will succumb, falling victim to harsh decree.

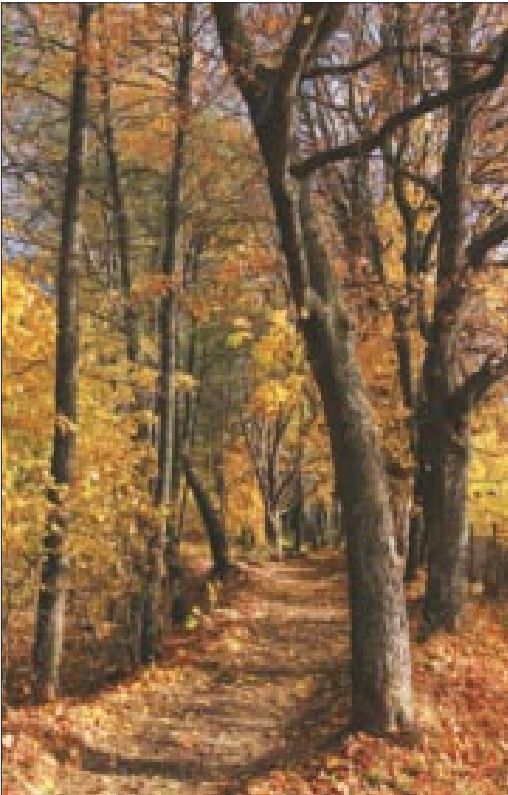
At the appointed season, the quiet darkness of death is natural. Even welcome.

Just as day follows night, spring will follow a winter of rest. Seasons turn into years. Years accumulate into lifetimes. The future will belong to the progeny.

Geese will make a return flight when winter is past. The blades of grass will sprout and flowers will grow and bloom anew. When the robin returns, a nest will be built high in a tree, barely visible, hidden amidst the strong branches and fresh growth of lush green leaves. In the spring, prolific signs of new life will be witnessed throughout the realm of nature.

But today, as I walk through a landscape painted with the rich warm tones of gold, crimson and bronze autumn leaves, I feel a cold wind that follows the setting of the sun. The wind whisks past and stings my unprotected cheeks.

Wishing I could retreat to a sanctuary of immunity, I am reminded of the revitalizing necessity of a time to rest.



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Recipe:

Cream of Mashed Potato Soup
submitted by Shirley Dessellier

Ingredients:

- 2 cups milk, or as needed
- 4 cups leftover mashed potatoes
- 2 cups cubed fully cooked ham
- 1 pinch salt and ground pepper
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

Heat milk in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir mashed potatoes into the warm milk until the mixture is smooth, adding more milk as needed to make it smooth. Add ham and stir. Cook the mixture until the ham cubes are hot in the middle, about 5-10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and top with cheddar cheese.